



**This week:**  
See our special pull-out  
section of Arlington's  
property revaluations.  
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# The Arlington Advocate



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84 PAGES 7 SECTIONS

## Union wants Schlichtman off board Budget battle heats up meeting at Minuteman Regional High School

BY SUSAN DANSEYAR  
STAFF WRITER

Paul Schlichtman, Arlington's representative to Minuteman Regional High School, has no intention of resigning his position despite a request from the teachers' union that he do so.

At Tuesday's School Committee meeting, Carol Brunaccini, the union president at the regional technology school in Lexington, suggested Schlichtman and Lexington's representative, Jane Pagett, resign unless they can be more cooperative with the other members of the committee.

The comments, along with criticism by Supt. Ronald Fitzgerald concerning Schlichtman's personal website, came during a meeting that was to have concentrated on the school's budget. The budget process has served in past years as a pressure cooker, with Fitzgerald and others lashing out against Arlington government officials who question what it costs the town to send students to the school.

Referring to Schlichtman's and Pagett's continuing focus on the budget inequities and the way member towns are assessed, Brunaccini said teachers at Minuteman don't appreciate being undercut by the

negative messages sent out by certain School Committee members. She said the negativism and unwillingness to support a majority stance was cause for resignation.

She said she was especially concerned because she represented teachers who had accepted a 2-percent salary increase in order to help Minuteman keep a tight budget in the upcoming year.

Liz McNenny, a former Arlington representative on the committee, read a prepared statement asking for the pursuit of excellence and thinking. She urged School Committee members not to forget their higher purpose during the difficult period

of budget decision-making. As an Arlington community member, she said she was speaking on behalf of those citizens who do not embrace legislation drafted by Rep. James Marzilli, D-Arlington, which allows member towns to reject spending more than 150 percent of the foundation (what the state calculates under Education Reform as the minimum cost of educating a student).

"The attack was obviously totally orchestrated by the superintendent," Schlichtman said on Wednesday morning. "The superintendent wants me to resign because



FILE PHOTO

■ SEE MINUTEMAN, PAGE 9

## Chamber picks new leader

BY LINDSEY BLAIVAS  
STAFF WRITER

After six years, Carol Ryerson is stepping down as president of the Chamber of Commerce, and Vice President Chuck Pappas is taking her place.

The two of them have worked together from bad times to good, beginning when the Chamber was behind in rent and bankrupt.

"Six years ago the economy was terrible and the future of the Chamber did not look good," said Ryerson, who refers to Pappas as her co-president. "Chuck and I knew that somebody had to take care of this."

At the time the past president had left and taken his secretary with him. Both Ryerson and Pappas were on the Board of Directors and saw the turmoil that was left behind. They made a conscious decision to do something about it.

"We really believed in the Chamber and understood that the business community needed a voice," said Ryerson.

So the two worked on a volunteer basis for over two years.

But not without the help of Kip Cooper, who acted as a secretary and created the town-wide database. At the time Cooper was on disability, battling MS, but Ryerson said he was absolutely invaluable.

"He was by far the most influential person in helping us get the Chamber going again," said Ryerson.

The first job they tackled was to

■ SEE CHAMBER, PAGE 8

## Life on the streets

Resident gets up-close view of homelessness

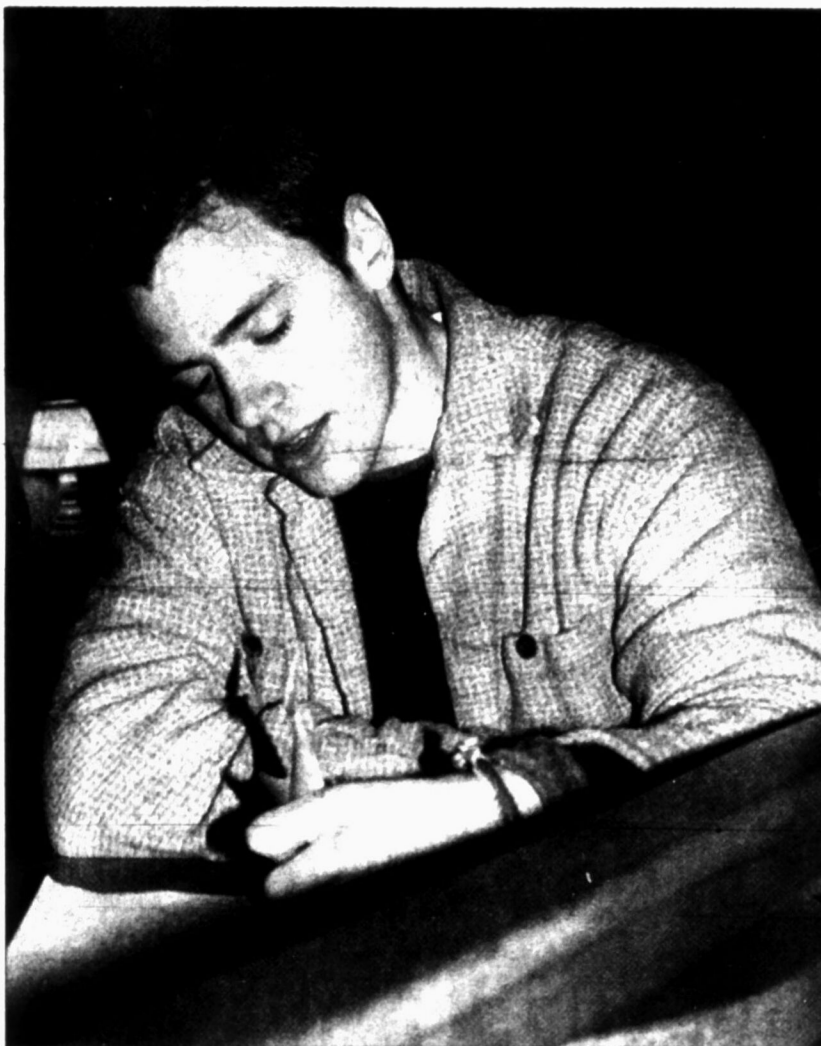
BY SUSAN DANSEYAR  
STAFF WRITER

Arlington resident Bob Keefe believes a delicate balance of factors often determines who ends up living on the street.

As a counselor for the Pine Street Inn, Keefe has come to know quite a few of the homeless men and women in Boston. For the past five months, he has ridden a van through the city from dusk until dawn each night to make contact with these often friendly people, learning their stories.

"In different circumstances, that could be any one of us," Keefe said. "Without loving families, without health insurance — even suffering from a period of depression where we can't get help to pull ourselves out of it, we could find ourselves without a job, without money and then without a home."

Recently, Keefe's hours were reduced from seven to five nights a week, from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. The city of Boston donated \$80,000 for Pine Street to purchase a second van and staff it until May. Consequently, two vans now go out every night with a crew each of at least three counselors. The vans circle streets in South Boston, along the waterfront, Kenmore Square,



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN DANSEYAR

Pine Street Inn counselor Bob Keefe works from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. five nights a week but still finds time to run, play music and write poetry.

Allston, Brighton and areas along Boylston and Newbury Streets, stopping every few blocks so the counselors can get out and talk to the homeless and give them food, coffee, medicine, sanitary supplies and extra

clothing.

"After years of the van going out, the counselors know where a lot of the people will be," Keefe said. At 23, he is the youngest of the counselors and works with a

■ SEE HOMELESS, PAGE 8

## Peirce Field plan gets preliminary approval \$700,000 in funding not yet in place

BY LINDSEY BLAIVAS  
STAFF WRITER

Though it may be a while before shovels actually go into the ground, the future of Arlington High School's athletic complex looks bright for the first time in 18 years.

With a letter from Sen. Bob Havern III, D-Arlington, committing \$220,000 in state funds, the School Committee accepted a plan "in principal" from the Arlington Youth Alliance (AYA) Tuesday night. The plan sets the ball in motion for upgrades to Peirce Field, including lights, a press box, and renovations to the stands.

Though Havern has "committed" the funds, he does not have the money in hand yet.

"There are a few different vehicles the money could come from," Havern said. "One is from the Transportation Bond Bill, which should be coming at the end of February, and another is through the supplemental budget."

Selectman Charles Lyons, who earlier this month came up with a plan to fund renovations to the stands, has questioned whether Havern can actually get the money for the project.

Havern admitted that it is not a 100-percent guarantee, but said he has made it a top priority.

Encouraged by the possibilities, School Committee member William Carey talked about the long overdue renovations.

"We are talking about the worst

field in the state, possible in the country, and the only way we are going to get this done is through a concerted effort," Carey said.

Despite the new-found enthusiasm surrounding the proposal, questions linger not only about funding, but also about a timetable for the work.

Preliminary results from borings taken in the area of the fields indicate that some of the soil is contaminated with motor oil. The ground cannot be touched until final results are in from the tests and a plan is completed on how to remove the contamination.

The plan submitted by the AYA consists of three phases and ultimately will turn Arlington into a major sports complex.

Phase one consists of the purchasing of field lights, press box, concessions stand, scoreboard, grandstands, and additional plumbing and electrical work. The estimated cost is \$385,000.

The second phase includes the repair of the baseball diamond, lights, grandstands, team benches and the moving of the field. The estimated cost is \$218,000.

The third phase is dedicated to the construction of a new basketball court. The estimated cost is \$30,000.

The AYA has also suggested a skating rink located at the high school.

In addition the AYA addressed maintenance as a crucial issue.

"We do not want to find ourselves in the same position ten

■ SEE FIELD, PAGE 9

## INSIDE



A teacher at the Lesley Ellis School in East Arlington assists a student. For a feature story on the school, turn to page 11.

### Winter Survival



See the special section for a listing of great places to sled, skate, sip fine teas — or hibernate with one of many classic films — this winter.

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## Odors, hotel among concerns raised by E. Arlington residents

BY SUSAN DANSEYAR  
STAFF WRITER

Members of the East Arlington Good Neighborhood Committee say they follow the philosophy that every single person counts.

So when George Bererian of Broadway told the group gathered at the Fox Library last Wednesday that he is having trouble living with the odors emanating from nearby restaurants, the 100 or so people in the room unanimously agreed to support his efforts to control the establishments' exhaust emissions.

Bererian said he has complained to the town about his problem for many years but was told no one can do anything about the odors.

"With a Mexican restaurant on one side of me and a caterer on the other, I can't sit in my backyard because the smell is so powerful," he said.

Bererian said he called the Department of Environmental Protection and was told the town has authority in such a situation. Staff at the Board of Health, however, were unable to help him, he said. Several years ago, said commit-

**'With a Mexican restaurant on one side of me and a caterer on the other, I can't sit in my backyard because the smell is so powerful.'**

GEORGE BERERIAN

tee member Elsie Fiore, owners of Cafe Flora on Massachusetts Avenue agreed to install special filters, despite their cost of some \$2,000, because some neighbors were bothered by cooking odors. Therefore, Fiore said, precedent has been set and Bererian might think of working on a warrant article that requires cooking establishments to install a filtration system as a prerequisite to getting a permit to conduct business in Arlington.

Peter Villandry, of Precinct Seven, will write the warrant article for April Town Meeting.

"That's the way we work here," said committee chairman George Laite. "We're not just a group that

says 'no' but we look for constructive ways to allow growth and keep the integrity of our neighborhoods."

Established approximately nine years ago, the committee meets monthly to discuss ways its members can protect the quality of life in their neighborhood. Issues such as parking, development and the environment are the most oft-discussed topics. In the past, Laite said, the group has been effective in protecting the neighborhood, most memorably spearheading the effort to keep McDonald's from coming into the spot where CVS now sits.

Current concerns of the group include the proposed hotel for the old Arrow Pontiac site. It's a long and complicated issue, said Fiore. She and Russell Bartash helped file an appeal of the Redevelopment Board's agreement to the proposed plan but their case, due to a technicality, was not admitted in Middlesex Superior Court.

Residents agreed the spot requires a traffic study and expressed bitterness that one was not conducted for the area whereas

■ SEE E. ARLINGTON, PAGE 9



STAFF PHOTO BY MARC VASCONCELLOS

An Arlington firefighter surveys damage inside the bedroom of a Teresa Circle home Friday. The blaze, which caused extensive smoke damage throughout the house, is under investigation.



## CORRECTION

A story in last week's edition on affordable housing should have said that while the median price of a home in Arlington is rising, the median income has not kept pace, according to industry figures. Exact median income figures will be available

when the 2000 Census is completed.

A story that ran in the Jan. 14 Potpourri page incorrectly listed the phone number for the Belmont restaurant, Café Fiorella. The number is (617) 489-1361.

## MEETING

**February 1**  
Board of Assessors, 7:30 p.m., Board of Assessors Room, Town Hall

Hardy School Council, 5 p.m., Room One, Hardy School

Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee, 7:30 p.m., first floor conference room, Town Hall Annex

Finance Committee, 7:30 p.m., Community Safety Building

**February 2**  
Arlington Historic Commission, 7:30 p.m., Whittemore Robbins House

Permanent Town Building Committee, 7:30 p.m., second

floor conference room, Town Hall Annex

**February 3**  
Arlington Municipal Federal Credit Union, 5 p.m., Hearing Room, Town Hall

Finance Committee, 7:30 p.m., Community Safety Building

**February 4**  
Arlington Conservation Commission, 7:30 p.m., DPW Conference Room, Town Hall Annex

Thompson School, 3:30 p.m., library at the Thompson school

Millennium Celebration Committee, 7:30 p.m., Hearing Room, Town Hall

## ROUNDUP

### Contestant field getting larger

Elected officials who are running for reelection have until Monday, Feb. 1 and those running for the first time have until Thursday, Feb. 4 to pull papers for Town Election on March 27.

On Jan. 26, Judith A. Quimby pulled papers for the selectmen's race. Stephen Gilligan, Charles Lyons and Diane Mahon already pulled papers.

In the school committee race, Joan LaMachia pulled papers on Jan. 24, Lyman G. Judd Jr. pulled papers on Jan. 22 and Stuart P. Cleinman pulled papers on Jan. 26. Martin Thrope, Barbara Goodman and Suzanne Baratta Owayda already pulled papers.

### Town Manager seeks to fill board vacancies

The Town Manager's Office announces that there is a vacancy on the Arlington Historical Commission and the Arlington Redevelopment Board.

Any Arlington resident inter-

ested in serving on these boards should send a letter, along with a resume, to the Town Manager's Office, Town Hall, 730 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, MA 02476-4908.

### DTC plans caucus

The Arlington Democratic Town Committee will hold a caucus on Saturday, February 13 at noon in the meeting room, second floor of the Community Safety Building, 112 Mystic St.

The purpose of the caucus will be to elect delegates to represent Arlington at the Democratic State Convention to be held at the Springfield Civic Center on Saturday May 15. All voters registered as Democrats are welcome to attend and vote.

### Volunteers needed for election work

Residents interested in working as election workers at the polls during 1999 should contact the Board of Selectmen's office at 316-3020.

# Experts give reaction to Social Security plan

BARBARA FORSTER  
SPECIAL TO THE ADVOCATE

The future of Social Security and how it is funded was up for discussion on Sunday at Town Hall, where nearly 80 people from Arlington and area towns attended a panel discussion.

"I wanted to hear from you as the debate percolates so that I can understand what you want me to do," said U.S. Rep. Ed Markey, D-Malden, who organized the event.

Markey, who was recently appointed to the House Budget Committee which will discuss the subject, explained that the State of the Union message delivered by President Clinton earlier this month prompted the forums. Clinton wants to fund Social Security via the stock market, using a percentage of government surplus as the initial investment.

"The president focused on the solvency of Social Security and I wanted an immediate response from Arlington and Lexington residents," said Markey.

Panelists included Judy Chesser, deputy commissioner of the U.S. Social Security Administration; Phil Mamber, treasurer of the Massachusetts Senior Action Council; and Bob Hannon, regional director of the Concord Coalition. In general, Chesser supported Clinton's idea, Hannon was cautious, and Mamber opposed it.

Social Security is currently predicted to be solvent until the year 2032. The Clinton plan is designed to extend solvency until 2055.

#### Audience reaction

"It was interesting to hear the different points of view," said Arlington resident Dr. Carole Allen. "I still don't understand the state/town government situation, but I do recognize the complexity of it all."

Joan Banks of Arlington said, "My husband is just at 65 and I'm coming along. I want to understand the situation better."

"I'm a beneficiary," added Bill Stevenson of Arlington, "but I hear from my kids who are middle-age that they are concerned about their retirement. I tell them it can be fixed but they tend not to believe me. This meeting was very informative."

"This was a good comprehensive picture of where we are now and what the problems are for the future," said John Steele of Arling-



STAFF PHOTOS BY SUE SICKLER

Jim Yannes asks a question during a forum featuring a panel of experts on Social Security issues Sunday in Town Hall.

ton. "We're too far from Washington to know what's going on. We need meetings like this to get inside information."

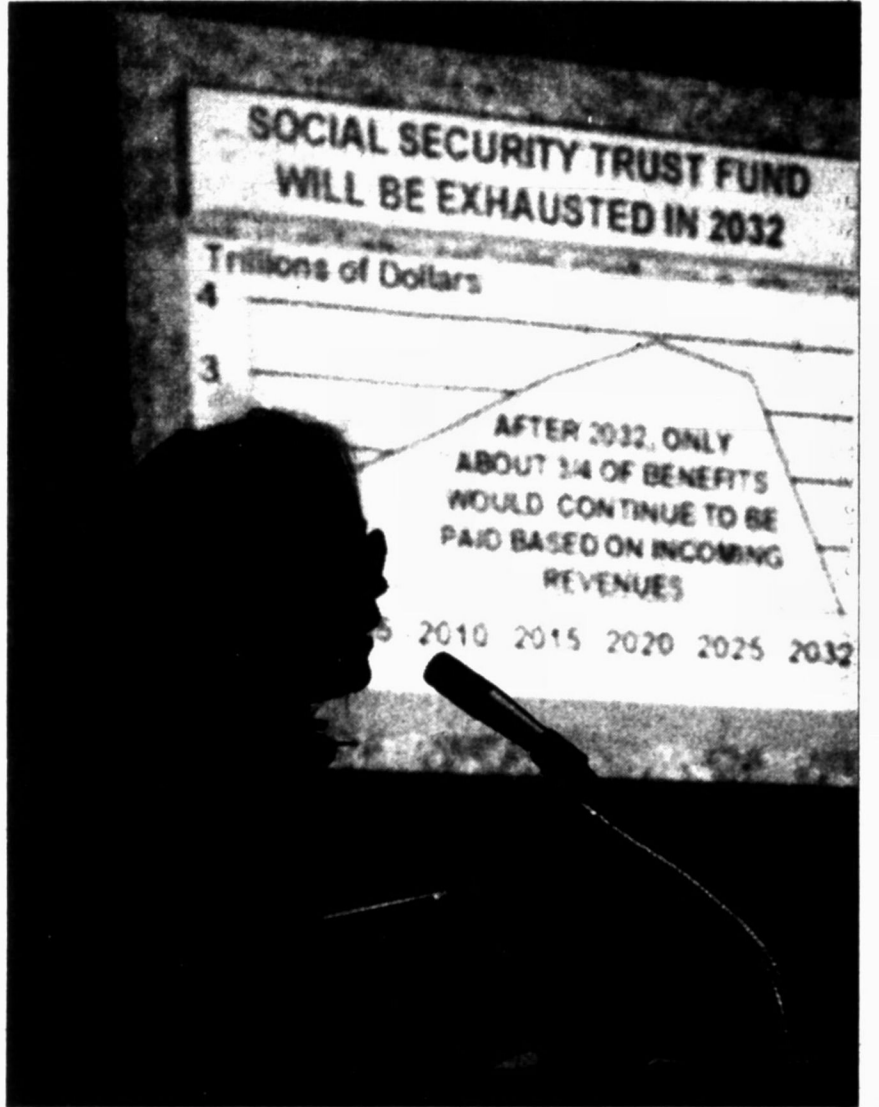
Markey said the forums are a learning tool for him, too.

"I came away with the feeling that we are the beginning of the discussions," Markey said following the forum. "The public has to learn a lot more about the existing condition of Social Security. I want to stress that Social Security is not in crises now, but we have to work today to avert one later."

As the meeting concluded Markey stressed the importance of Social Security in the lives of area residents noting that out of 600,000 people in the 7th Congressional District, 110,000 receive Social Security benefits.

"Monica comes and goes," he said with a smile, "but the largest number of calls to my office every year are about Social Security. If those checks stopped arriving, we would immediately be transported back to 1933."

Arlington was one of seven towns selected for the "traveling" series. The group was in Framingham and Waltham on Saturday and in Medford later Sunday afternoon. Forums in Malden and Wakefield are slated for Feb. 6 and Revere is the last stop on Feb. 7.



Judy Chesser talks to participants at a forum on Social Security issues hosted by U.S. Rep. Ed Markey, D-Malden.

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## POLICE LOG

Jan. 22

At 7:35 p.m., police arrested Yves Charles, 19, of 24C North St., Somerville, and charged him with two straight warrants.

Police responded to a report of an unwanted guest at a Hearth Street residence. There they spoke with Charles who said that he just wanted to visit friends but that they would not let him in. A computer check revealed two outstanding warrants. Charles was arrested and transported to the station.

At 7:35 p.m., police arrested Wally Jacques Simon, 21, of 51 Fairfax St., Somerville, and charged him with possession of marijuana.

At 10:15 p.m. police arrested William Vega, 17, of 223 Essex St., Melrose, and charged him with

trespass on land and minor transporting of alcohol.

Police responded to a report of a youth gathering behind Old Colony apartments. Police arrived and saw a group of youths behind the Arlington Veterans Memorial Skating Rink where there is a sign that reads, "No trespassing after 9 p.m."

The youth ran toward Summer Street, throwing beer cans and bottles to the ground. After a brief chase, police caught up with Vega and arrested him.

At 11:30 p.m., police arrested Corey Saxe, 19, of 34 Marion Road, and charged him with three counts of assault and battery.

Police reported to a Marion Street residence for a report of a

family disturbance. Officers were told that Saxe had been verbally and physically abusive to three members of his family. Police confronted Saxe and found him to be combative and emotional. Police arrested and transported Saxe to the station.

Jan. 23

At 1:45 a.m., police arrested Joseph Cremens, 46, of 124 Forest St., Medford, and charged him with a stop sign violation and operating under the influence of liquor.

After stopping a vehicle for failing to stop at a stop sign on Park Avenue, police noticed a strong odor of alcohol coming from the car. After refusing to undertake a sobriety test, police arrested Cremens.

## FIRE LOG

The Fire Department responded to 83 calls during the period of Jan. 18-24. The calls included 30 rescues, 20 investigations, and 13 fire.

Jan. 19

At 10:25 p.m., firefighters responded to Sunnyside Avenue for a 43-year-old man who had fallen backwards on his front steps. The man hit his head on the concrete and witnesses said that he was in and out of consciousness. When firefighters arrived the man was unresponsive and choking. Firefighters transported him to Symmes Hospital and Medical Center.

Jan. 21

At 6:39 a.m., firefighters responded to the intersection of Massachusetts and Park avenues for an injured jogger. The woman had a seizure while jogging and had fallen and hit her head. She was transported to Symmes.

At 8:30 a.m., firefighters responded to the Old Colony Lane apartments for a report of a fire.

The fire started in the range hood above the stove on a third floor apartment. Firefighters extinguished the fire and opened up the wall behind the stove to see if the fire had spread. They shut off the electricity and ventilated the building.

Jan. 22

At 2:07 p.m., firefighters responded to a report of a house fire on Teresa Circle.

The fire was confined to a bedroom on the second floor. Firefighters extinguished the fire and ventilated the house. There was extensive damage due to heat and smoke.

Jan. 23

At 11:36 a.m., firefighters responded to the Robbins Library for a woman who was locked in the first floor bathroom. Firefight-

ers removed the dead bolt lock and released her.

At 5:56 p.m., firefighters responded to Warren Street for a 64-year-old man who fell and hit his head on the ground. He was semiconscious and unresponsive. Firefighters bandaged cuts on his head and transported him Symmes.

Jan. 24

At 9:59 a.m., firefighters responded to Silk Street for a resident who injured his right thumb. Firefighters arrived and controlled the bleeding and transported him to Symmes.

## JUMP START



STAFF PHOTO BY RAY STUART

In a case of David helps Goliath, Jim Sullivan had to use his Chevrolet Corsica to jump start his snow-clearing truck during a cold spell last week.



STAFF PHOTO BY MARC VASCONCELLOS

Firefighters clean up their equipment after battling a house fire on Teresa Circle Friday afternoon.

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"I would like to thank all of my clients and customers, both past and present, as well as my friends, who have allowed me to service their real estate needs and have referred business to me. Their good will is my most important asset," Bittelari stated.

Bob will receive the award at the Century 21 International Convention in Las Vegas this March. Bob has been a realtor since 1988 and resides in Arlington with his wife Maureen and sons, Mike and Mark. His expert knowledge and skill, combined with his track record of producing results, make him the one to call whether you are looking to buy or sell your home. Bob can be reached at Century 21 Adams/Keenan/Cusack at 648-6900.

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60 Months	<b>6.65%</b>	\$19.63	7.75%	\$20.15
<b>USED CAR LOANS</b>				
36 Months	<b>6.90%</b>	\$30.82	8.00%	\$31.33
48 Months	<b>6.90%</b>	\$23.89	8.00%	\$24.41
54 Months	<b>7.15%</b>	\$21.71	8.25%	\$22.22

\*Includes discounts for checking, savings or CD account with Winchester Savings Bank with automatic withdrawal and direct deposit. \*\* Without discounts.



CORRECTION

• A story in last week's edition on affordable housing should have said that while the median price of a home in Arlington is rising, the median income has not kept pace, according to industry figures. Exact median income figures will be available

when the 2000 Census is completed.

• A story that ran in the Jan. 14 Potpourri page incorrectly listed the phone number for the Belmont restaurant, Café Fiorella. The number is (617) 489-1361.

MEETING

**February 1**  
Board of Assessors, 7:30 p.m., Board of Assessors Room, Town Hall

**Hardy School Council**, 5 p.m., Room One, Hardy School

**Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee**, 7:30 p.m., first floor conference room, Town Hall Annex

**Finance Committee**, 7:30 p.m., Community Safety Building

**February 2**  
Arlington Historic Commission, 7:30 p.m., Whittemore Robbins House

**Permanent Town Building Committee**, 7:30 p.m., second

floor conference room, Town Hall Annex

**February 3**  
Arlington Municipal Federal Credit Union, 5 p.m., Hearing Room, Town Hall

**Finance Committee**, 7:30 p.m., Community Safety Building

**February 4**  
Arlington Conservation Commission, 7:30 p.m., DPW Conference Room, Town Hall Annex

**Thompson School**, 3:30 p.m., library at the Thompson school

**Millennium Celebration Committee**, 7:30 p.m., Hearing Room, Town Hall

ROUNDUP

Contestant field getting larger

Elected officials who are running for reelection have until Monday, Feb. 1 and those running for the first time have until Thursday, Feb. 4 to pull papers for Town Election on March 27.

On Jan. 26, Judith A. Quimby pulled papers for the selectmen's race. Stephen Gilligan, Charles Lyons and Diane Mahon already pulled papers.

In the school committee race, Joan LaMachia pulled papers on Jan. 24, Lyman G. Judd Jr. pulled papers on Jan. 22 and Stuart P. Cleinman pulled papers on Jan. 26. Martin Thrope, Barbara Goodman and Suzanne Baratta Owayda already pulled papers.

Town Manager seeks to fill board vacancies

The Town Manager's Office announces that there is a vacancy on the Arlington Historical Commission and the Arlington Redevelopment Board.

Any Arlington resident inter-

ested in serving on these boards should send a letter, along with a resume, to the Town Manager's Office, Town Hall, 730 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, MA 02476-4908.

DTC plans caucus

The Arlington Democratic Town Committee will hold a caucus on Saturday, February 13 at noon in the meeting room, second floor of the Community Safety Building, 112 Mystic St.

The purpose of the caucus will be to elect delegates to represent Arlington at the Democratic State Convention to be held at the Springfield Civic Center on Saturday May 15. All voters registered as Democrats are welcome to attend and vote.

Volunteers needed for election work

Residents interested in working as election workers at the polls during 1999 should contact the Board of Selectmen's office at 316-3020.

Experts give reaction to Social Security plan

BARBARA FORSTER  
SPECIAL TO THE ADVOCATE

The future of Social Security and how it is funded was up for discussion on Sunday at Town Hall, where nearly 80 people from Arlington and area towns attended a panel discussion.

"I wanted to hear from you as the debate percolates so that I can understand what you want me to do," said U.S. Rep. Ed Markey, D-Malden, who organized the event.

Markey, who was recently appointed to the House Budget Committee which will discuss the subject, explained that the State of the Union message delivered by President Clinton earlier this month prompted the forums. Clinton wants to fund Social Security via the stock market, using a percentage of government surplus as the initial investment.

"The president focused on the solvency of Social Security and I wanted an immediate response from Arlington and Lexington residents," said Markey.

Panelists included Judy Chesser, deputy commissioner of the U.S. Social Security Administration; Phil Mamber, treasurer of the Massachusetts Senior Action Council; and Bob Hannon, regional director of the Concord Coalition. In general, Chesser supported Clinton's idea, Hannon was cautious, and Mamber opposed it.

Social Security is currently predicted to be solvent until the year 2032. The Clinton plan is designed to extend solvency until 2055.

Audience reaction

"It was interesting to hear the different points of view," said Arlington resident Dr. Carole Allen. "I still don't understand the state/town government situation, but I do recognize the complexity of it all."

Joan Banks of Arlington said, "My husband is just at 65 and I'm coming along. I want to understand the situation better."

"I'm a beneficiary," added Bill Stevenson of Arlington, "but I hear from my kids who are middle-age that they are concerned about their retirement. I tell them it can be fixed but they tend not to believe me. This meeting was very informative."

"This was a good comprehensive picture of where we are now and what the problems are for the future," said John Steele of Arling-



Jim Yannes asks a question during a forum featuring a panel of experts on Social Security issues Sunday in Town Hall.

ton. "We're too far from Washington to know what's going on. We need meetings like this to get inside information."

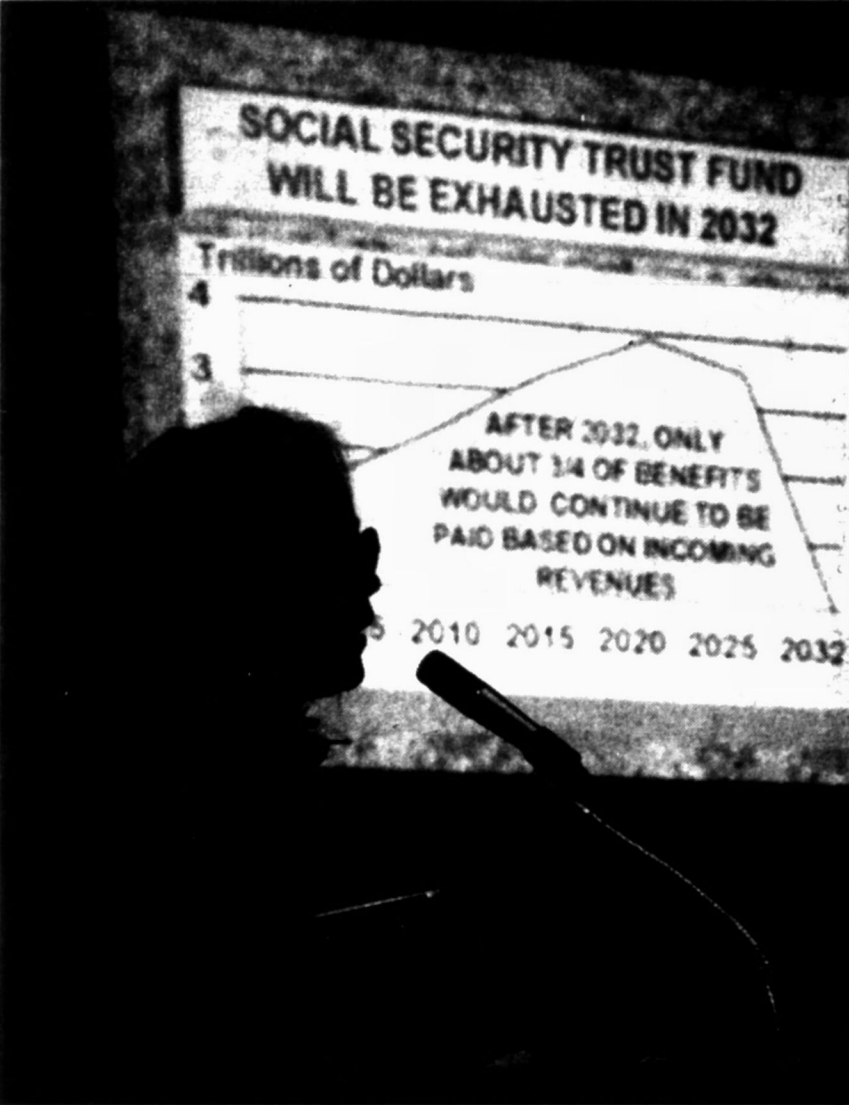
Markey said the forums are a learning tool for him, too.

"I came away with the feeling that we are the beginning of the discussions," Markey said following the forum. "The public has to learn a lot more about the existing condition of Social Security. I want to stress that Social Security is not in crises now, but we have to work today to avert one later."

As the meeting concluded Markey stressed the importance of Social Security in the lives of area residents noting that out of 600,000 people in the 7th Congressional District, 110,000 receive Social Security benefits.

"Monica comes and goes," he said with a smile, "but the largest number of calls to my office every year are about Social Security. If those checks stopped arriving, we would immediately be transported back to 1933."

Arlington was one of seven towns selected for the "traveling" series. The group was in Framingham and Waltham on Saturday and in Medford later Sunday afternoon. Forums in Malden and Wakefield are slated for Feb. 6 and Revere is the last stop on Feb. 7.



Judy Chesser talks to participants at a forum on Social Security issues hosted by U.S. Rep. Ed Markey, D-Malden.

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## POLICE LOG

Jan. 22

At 7:35 p.m., police arrested Yves Charles, 19, of 24C North St., Somerville, and charged him with two straight warrants.

Police responded to a report of an unwanted guest at a Hearth Street residence. There they spoke with Charles who said that he just wanted to visit friends but that they would not let him in. A computer check revealed two outstanding warrants. Charles was arrested and transported to the station.

At 7:35 p.m., police arrested Wally Jacques Simon, 21, of 51 Fairfax St., Somerville, and charged him with possession of marijuana.

At 10:15 p.m., police arrested William Vega, 17, of 223 Essex St., Melrose, and charged him with

trespass on land and minor transporting of alcohol.

Police responded to a report of a youth gathering behind Old Colony apartments. Police arrived and saw a group of youths behind the Arlington Veterans Memorial Skating Rink where there is a sign that reads, "No trespassing after 9 p.m."

The youth ran toward Summer Street, throwing beer cans and bottles to the ground. After a brief chase, police caught up with Vega and arrested him.

At 11:30 p.m., police arrested Corey Saxe, 19, of 34 Marion Road, and charged him with three counts of assault and battery.

Police reported to a Marion Street residence for a report of a

family disturbance. Officers were told that Saxe had been verbally and physically abusive to three members of his family. Police confronted Saxe and found him to be combative and emotional. Police arrested and transported Saxe to the station.

Jan. 23

At 1:45 a.m., police arrested Joseph Cremens, 46, of 124 Forest St., Medford, and charged him with a stop sign violation and operating under the influence of liquor.

After stopping a vehicle for failing to stop at a stop sign on Park Avenue, police noticed a strong odor of alcohol coming from the car. After refusing to undertake a sobriety test, police arrested Cremens.

## FIRE LOG

The Fire Department responded to 83 calls during the period of Jan. 18-24. The calls included 30 rescues, 20 investigations, and 13 fires.

Jan. 19

At 10:25 p.m., firefighters responded to Sunnyside Avenue for a 43-year-old man who had fallen backwards on his front steps. The man hit his head on the concrete and witnesses said that he was in and out of consciousness. When firefighters arrived the man was unresponsive and choking. Firefighters transported him to Symmes Hospital and Medical Center.

Jan. 21

At 6:39 a.m., firefighters responded to the intersection of Massachusetts and Park avenues for an injured jogger. The woman had a seizure while jogging and had fallen and hit her head. She was transported to Symmes.

At 8:30 a.m., firefighters responded to the Old Colony Lane apartments for a report of a fire.

The fire started in the range hood above the stove on a third floor apartment. Firefighters extinguished the fire and opened up the wall behind the stove to see if the fire had spread. They shut off the electricity and ventilated the building.

Jan. 22

At 2:07 p.m., firefighters responded to a report of a house fire on Teresa Circle.

The fire was confined to a bedroom on the second floor. Firefighters extinguished the fire and ventilated the house. There was extensive damage due to heat and smoke.

Jan. 23

At 11:36 a.m., firefighters responded to the Robbins Library for a woman who was locked in the first floor bathroom. Firefight-

ers removed the dead bolt lock and released her.

At 5:56 p.m., firefighters responded to Warren Street for a 64-year-old man who fell and hit his head on the ground. He was semiconscious and unresponsive. Firefighters bandaged cuts on his head and transported him Symmes.

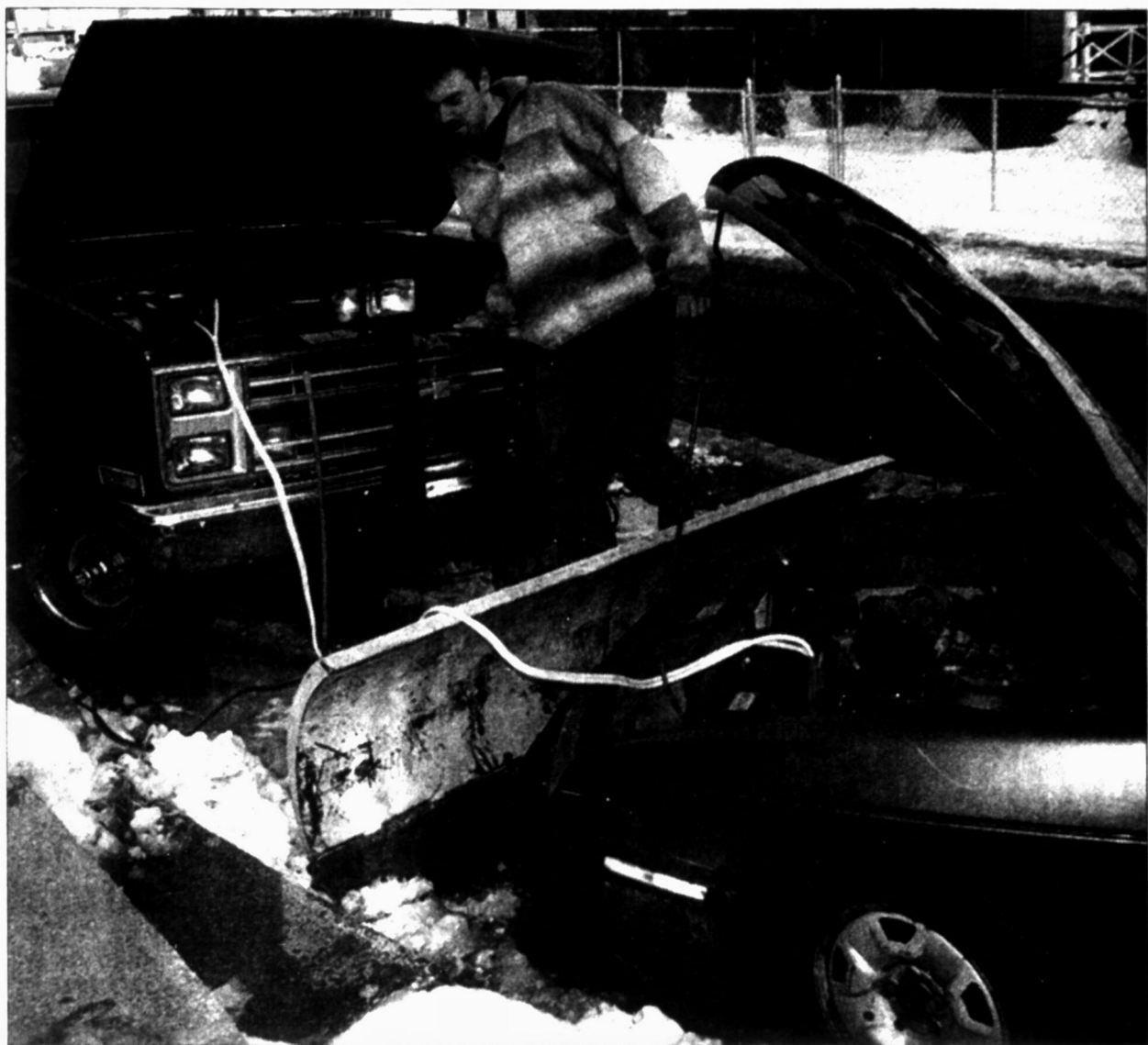
Jan. 24

At 9:59 a.m., firefighters responded to Silk Street for a resident who injured his right thumb. Firefighters arrived and controlled the bleeding and transported him to Symmes.



Firefighters clean up their equipment after battling a house fire on Teresa Circle Friday afternoon.

## JUMP START



In a case of David helps Goliath, Jim Sullivan had to use his Chevrolet Corsica to jump start his snow-clearing truck during a cold spell last week.

STAFF PHOTO BY RAY STUART

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"I would like to thank all of my clients and customers, both past and present, as well as my friends, who have allowed me to service their real estate needs and have referred business to me. Their good will is my most important asset," Bittelari stated.

Bob will receive the award at the Century 21 International Convention in Las Vegas this March. Bob has been a realtor since 1988 and resides in Arlington with his wife Maureen and sons, Mike and Mark. His expert knowledge and skill, combined with his track record of producing results, make him the one to call whether you are looking to buy or sell your home. Bob can be reached at Century 21 Adams/Keenan/Cusack at 648-6900

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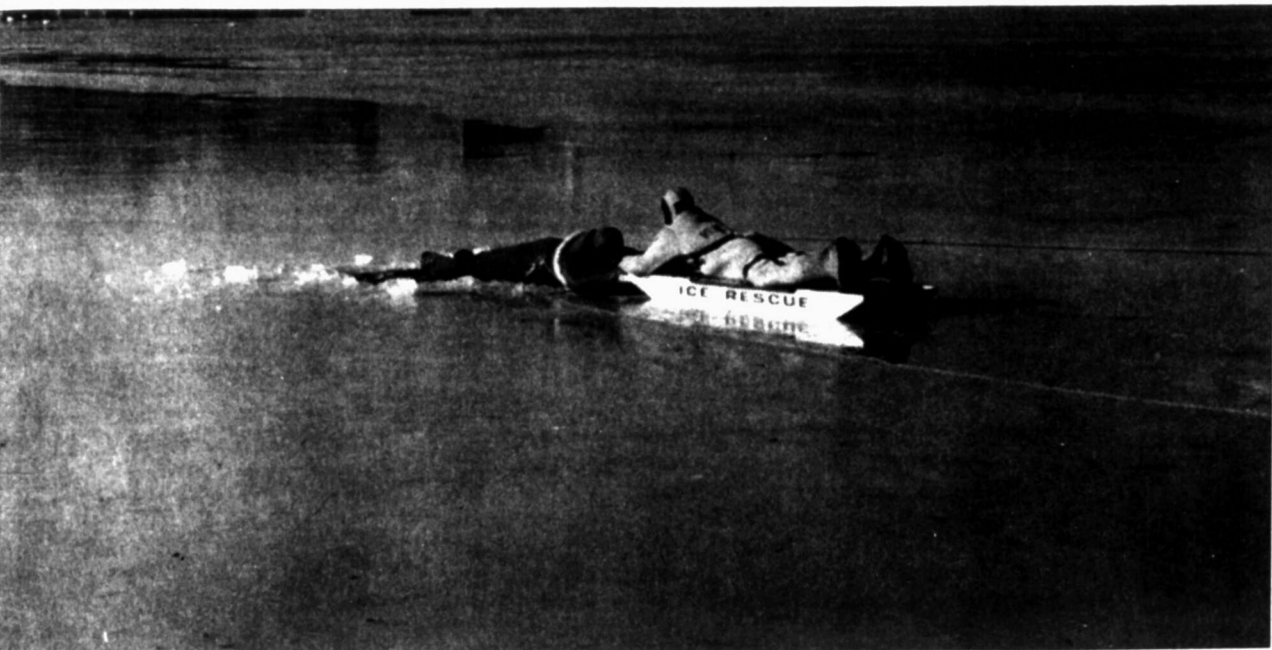
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54 Months	7.15%	\$21.71	8.25%	\$22.22

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For new autos, minimum loan term 12 months; maximum loan term 60 months; for used autos, minimum loan term 12 months; maximum loan term 54 months. Payment per \$1,000 borrowed is figured with 30 days to the first payment. Fire, theft, and collision insurance is required with a deductible of \$500. A 5% down payment is required on new cars and a 10% down payment is required on used cars.





Two members of the Arlington Fire Department rescue squad practice ice rescues on Spy Pond last week.

# Authorities: Residents should avoid using frozen waterways

BY LINDSEY BLAIVAS  
STAFF WRITER

The wintertime news of yet another hero dying in an attempt to save someone who had fallen through thin ice brings a not so gentle reminder from Arlington authorities: no frozen pond, lake or stream is safe for walking upon. "People make the mistake of going out on ice when they shouldn't," said Capt. Jeff Cummings of the Arlington Fire Department. "Though neither the fire department nor the police department have the right to kick people off the ice, I say go to a skating rink. We never know when it is safe to go out on ice."

Despite the warnings, officials know that some residents will venture out onto the waterways, once they freeze. For this reason, they train for ice rescues and are willing to give tips about what to do in the event someone falls in.

Your first instinct when someone falls through the ice, may be your worst, said Cummings. "People panic and they want to go in after the person," Cummings said. "It is the worst thing you can do because you are endangering yourself. Then there are two victims instead of one."

The best thing to do is call 911, or send someone else to call 911 while you remain with the victim. It is also important to clock how long the person has been in the water so you can tell the rescue team when they arrive.

But what if you are far from a phone and no one is around? The right thing may be to call 911, but if it is your own child you may not want to risk the delay.

The first thing to do is to try and calm and reassure the person in

the water. Talk to them, and see if they can help themselves by grabbing onto the edge of the ice, experts said.

Cummings said if you have to do something, find an object you can send along the ice so that the victim can grab onto it, like a log or a rope. Still the best thing to do is leave it to the experts, Cummings reiterated.

When a calls comes in, firefighters immediately send two fire engines, one ladder truck, and a rescue squad, totaling 12 people.

The fire department can usually get to any place in Arlington within four minutes. During that time, one member of the rescue team is assigned to put on a dry suit — a waterproof, buoyant, enclosed suit — so that by the time they reach their destination he will be ready to go out on the ice.

All together four men put on suits, two as back-up in case there is more than one victim, and the other two who go directly out on the ice.

Once at the scene, the first thing the firefighters do is to quickly figure out the condition of the victim.

If the victim is conscious and alert, then the rescue team judges whether the victim can help himself.

"Much of the time the victim is panicked and scared. We try to calm them down, tell them that help is here and then see if they can grab onto the ice themselves," said Cummings.

More often than not they cannot, at which point the assigned member of the rescue team goes out on the ice on a rescue sled. The ice rescue sled holds one man and is equipped with ice-picks to help propel it forward. The sled also

floats and can be used in water, like a raft.

In addition, one member is assigned to watch the victim so that if he or she does go under the rescuers know exactly where.

The firefighters on shore attach a line to the sled as the rescue team prepares to propel out to the victim. Once the sled reaches the victim, the rescuer wraps another line around him or throws him a buoy and the shore men pull both in.

If the victim is not conscious, than it is likely that hypothermia has set in.

"It takes about 15 minutes before hypothermia sets in. At that point the victim loses much of their strength. Their limbs become numb making it almost impossible for them to grab hold of anything," said Cummings.

But in a way, said Cummings, an unresponsive victim can be easier to rescue because they are not struggling.

"Many times an alert victim can be combative because they are panicked and they grab at the rescuer making it more difficult," said Cummings.

The hardest victims to save are the ones who are struggling and panicking, said Cummings.

Even though firefighters are trained and prepared for accidents, said Cummings, the best thing for everyone to do is avoid the ice altogether.

"Even if people are already skating on a pond, it does not mean the entire pond is frozen. People often think a pond covered in snow is safe to walk on. It's not," said Cummings.

His advice is to stay off the ice all together, unless you are in a rink, and if an accident occurs, call 911 immediately.

# Property reassessments: A look behind the numbers

BY SUSAN DANSEYAR  
STAFF WRITER

Assessing the value of homes in the community is not an exact science but rather an art.

That's because every house does not sell every year. Rather, to calculate assessments, the assessors take each home that has sold that calendar year and divide its assessed value by the selling price, said Robert Greeley, director of assessments. Therefore, the reassessment completed on Jan. 1, 1998 for Arlington's 14,279 residential properties used 331 homes that sold in 1996. Dividing the town into six neighborhoods, the assessors took each home's assessed value and divided it by the most recent selling price and then verified that number by applying it to a number of variables including neighborhood, style of the house, gross living area, grade (quality), condition, number of bathrooms, number of fireplaces, year built and whether or not there are porches, finished basements and finished attics.

Each time the town performs a reassessment of residential properties, the state Department of Revenue must certify the numbers, Greeley said. The law states the median value for the class of property must fall between .9 and 1.1 percent of fair market value.

The assessors update data constantly, Greeley said, in order to assess fairly, equitably and consistently. "We stand by the quality of our data," he said. "It's possible for numbers to be inexact, either higher or lower (than the percentage the law requires the value must be assessed at) because every single property does not come in between .9 percent and 1.1 percent but the median does."

**Study indicates bias**

Arlington residents Darcy Devney and Robert Kuhn, however, recently completed a study that they say indicates homes in this town are unfairly assessed when compared to those in other neighborhoods.

Compiling data from the Assessor's Office and Banker & Tradesman on the Internet, Devney and Kuhn, who live on Thorndike Street, found only 10 percent of the single-family homes sold in Arlington last year had assessments of 94 percent or more of sale price, despite the town's claim that it assesses at 94 percent of market value. In fact, they say half the properties sold in Arlington were assessed at less than 78 percent of market value.

"Within that 78 percent, there's an enormous range from below 50 percent to well over 100 percent," said Kuhn, who has a background in mathematics and works in the computer industry. "Our data shows that this is not just true with a few houses: there are a lot with assessments of under 60 percent and a lot with assessments of over 90 percent. The spread is disturbingly large."

Plotting their extensive data on various charts and graphs, Kuhn and Devney found more expensive houses in town are

**See page 31 for a special section of 1999 property reassessments**

assessed at a smaller percentage of their sale price. "Drive down Jason Street and ponder why all but two properties are assessed at less than \$500,000 and almost half of them are assessed below \$300,000," Devney said. "Why is a 6,234 square-foot Jason Street mansion with 18 rooms, eight bedrooms, five bathrooms, two fireplaces, two porches and a garage located on a 27,073 square-foot lot assessed for only \$481,800 (\$45.93 per square foot)?"

The trend in lower assessments seems to be true for single family, two-family and three-family homes, Devney and Kuhn said. It's also curious, they feel, that the more land homeowners have, the less money per square foot they pay.

"We are more than willing to pay our fair share of property tax in Arlington but it seems that homeowners of more expensive housing are paying a disproportionately small share of the property tax bill while homeowners of less expensive housing are paying a disproportionately large share," Devney said.

**Comparing like numbers**

Greeley examined the charts and graphs Devney and Kuhn submitted to the *Advocate*. At this time, Greeley said, he can attest that it's very possible there are mistakes in assessments of individual properties for a variety of reasons; including changes in the real estate market and changes made to homes which have not yet been recorded through permits.

The median number for homes assessed in Arlington, however, comes within the requirements of the law, Greeley said. Moreover, he said just a cursory look at Kuhn's and Devney's study indicates they have not measured precisely how reassessments were calculated because their numbers look at different years.

It is imperative that the same numbers are used in statistical analysis; in this case, Greeley said, his calculations based on sales prices in 1996 were compared by Kuhn and Devney to sales prices in 1997 and 1998 — two entirely different sets of calculations which is like measuring "apples and oranges".

In addition, Greeley said part of Kuhn's and Devney's study is based on total number of square feet. In fact, Greeley said, the larger the land square footage or building square footage, the less it will calculate out per square foot.

"Things adjust every three years when we look at the many variables affecting what makes up the real estate market," Greeley said. "The next revaluation, which will be for Fiscal Year 2001, will include our corrections of data."

Assessment is "Ad Valorem"

(one's ability to pay has nothing to do with it; rather, assessment has only to do with value of property), Greeley said. "The most important thing is that neighbors are assessed in relation to their neighbors," he said. "All six neighborhoods which we divide the town into for assessment purposes are calculated with the same requirements."

Real estate agents have said prices in 1997 and 1998 have increased at least 10 percent each year. Therefore, Greeley said, Kuhn's and Gavney's use of Calendar Years 1997 and 1998 were not relevant to their analysis of Fiscal Year 1998 assessments.

The inconsistency in assessment is most certainly unintentional, Kuhn and Devney believe. Their research shows there is a geographical bias but does not tell what the cause is, Kuhn said.

"Nothing jumps out to indicate why this is," he said. "I am certain it is not intentional but rather the result of some error in the assessment formula."

A tiny error made long ago could cause the inequity, Kuhn said. "For example, everything is figured on the original assessment figure so if there was any error, it may have grown with time," he said.

Perhaps some of the assessment formulas have to do with the age of a building, Devney said. "An older building might be assessed at a lower percentage when, in fact, older homes appreciate much more these days," she said.

Their study came about by accident several months ago after Devney and Kuhn saw the "House of the Week" in the Boston Globe, Kuhn said. The home, a cottage on Wachusett Avenue which sold for \$320,000 was on the market for \$340,000 but was assessed at \$209,000. "Clearly, the home was grossly under-assessed and raised some questions," Kuhn said. "Were expensive homes underassessed?; was this true in just in some neighborhoods?; or was it just this house?"

That's when they decided to look into the situation, Kuhn said. "We knew we had to examine a lot of houses to see if we were actually seeing something."

**Abatement option**

If taxpayers feel their assessment is too high, Greeley said, they have until 5 p.m. on Feb. 1 to file an application for abatement of real estate tax in the Board of Assessors office. It is in residents best interest, he pointed out, to be as specific as possible on the application if they want to convince the assessors that the assessment is too high.

Assessors have 90 days to respond to the application. If they agree with the applicant, they will reduce the assessment; if the assessors do not respond within 90 days, Greeley said, the application is denied.

Once residents receive the response, they have 90 days to challenge it if they want. In order to do so, residents must file a petition with the appellate tax board.

## POLITICAL NEWS

### Paulsen's hours

Rep. Anne M. Paulsen, D-Belmont, will hold office hours in Arlington on Friday, Feb. 5 from 1-2 p.m. at the Fox Library at the corner of Cleveland Street and Massachusetts Avenue.

Also, in order to be accessible to those who work during the day, Paulsen will also meet with constituents at the Fox Library on Wednesday, Feb. 17, from 7-8 p.m.

### Lyons' re-election committee meeting

The Committee to Re-elect Charlie Lyons to the Board of Selectmen will hold an organizational meeting from 7-9 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 2, at the American Legion Hall, 370 Massachusetts Ave.

All are welcome and encouraged to volunteer to help. For further information contact Nora Mann 646-6743, Paul Schlichtman, 641-3401, or Robin Lyons, 648-4150

### DTC plans caucus

The Arlington Democratic Town Committee will hold a caucus on Saturday, February 13 at noon in the meeting room, second floor of the Community Safety Building, 112 Mystic St.

The purpose of the caucus will be to elect delegates to represent Arlington at the Democratic State Convention to be held at the Springfield Civic Center on Saturday May 15. All voters registered as Democrats are welcome to attend and vote.

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### Osco files appeal

On Friday, American Stores filed an appeal of the Redevelopment Board's decision not to grant a special permit for the construction of an Osco Drug store in Arlington Center.

Town Council John Maher must file notice within 20 days to the court to announce the Redevelopment Board's plans to contest the appeal.

### NEWS

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## AND THE WINNERS ARE...



The Curran family of Arlington recently won a raffle run by Century 21 as part of a fund raising campaign for the Germaine Lawrence School.

## BUSINESS NEWS

## CSB promotions

Cambridge Savings Bank has announced the promotions of two employees at branch offices in Arlington.

Mary Anne McGovern of Arlington has been appointed assistant vice president at Cambridge Savings Bank.

McGovern, who has more than 21 years of experience in the banking industry, is currently the banking center manager at Cambridge Savings Bank's East Arlington Office. McGovern is a graduate of Holy Family College in Philadelphia, Pa.

Also named as an assistant vice president was Marion O'Brien of West Roxbury. O'Brien, who has 50 years of banking experience, manages the bank's Arlington Heights office.

O'Brien has worked at Cambridge Savings Bank for 14 years. Prior to Cambridge Savings Bank, she worked at Shawmut Bank for 36 years. She is a graduate of the Williams College School of Banking.

Headquartered in Harvard Square, Cambridge Savings Bank offers a full line of individual and business banking services. Cambridge Savings Bank has 11 Banking Centers in Cambridge, Arlington, Belmont, Bedford, Burlington and Lexington. Marion O'Brien of West Roxbury has been named assistant vice president at Cambridge Savings Bank.



Mary Anne McGovern



Marion O'Brien

## HCA receives funds from bank

Paula McNabb, assistant vice president and compliance officer of Medford Bank, recently awarded a \$5,000 grant to the Housing Corporation of Arlington (HCA).

Medford Bank is providing the funding as part of its annual Community Reinvestment Grant Program. This program makes grants available to various community organizations that assist people of low to moderate income in area cities and towns.

The HCA is among four of the area community programs selected to receive a grant in 1998. This organization is a community based nonprofit housing corporation working in Arlington to help low and moderate income families and individuals find housing options. Medford Bank's support will enable the



Robin Zucker, executive director of the Housing Corporation of Arlington, at left, accepts a check from Paula McNabb of Medford Bank.

HCA to implement a new before purchase home buyer counseling program.

## PEOPLE IN THE NEWS



Joan Larabee, left, accepts her award.

## Larabee honored by health agency

Cambridge Visiting Nurse Association, a VNA Care Network agency, presented Arlington resident Joan Larabee with an Excellence in Caring Award for outstanding service to the non-profit home health care agency.

A receptionist, Larabee was recognized for maintaining a consistently superior performance, exceeding the organization's standards and providing exceptional service in dealing with clients and professional associates. Nominated by her managers, candidates were chosen by a selection committee of employees.

Cambridge VNA is a VNA Care Network agency. Other Network agencies include VNA Care Plus, which provides wellness programs, Senior Place Adult Day Health Centers, Kids' Place Child Care Centers and private duty home health care; and Hospice of Cambridge/VNA Care Choices, which provides hospice and pain and symptom management in patients' homes and in two alternative residences. For more information about Cambridge VNA's services call (800) 728-1862 or visit <http://www.townonline.com/community/vna>.

## Marine helping hurricane victims

Marine Lance Cpl. Michael P. Williams, son of William P. and Donna K. Williams of Arlington, is currently participating in hurricane relief efforts in Central America while assigned to Combat Service Support Detachment 69 (CSSD-69) deployed from Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Williams is one of more than 500 Marines and sailors that are supporting Joint Task Force Eagle. The Marines and sailors were divided into three teams and deployed to the Central American countries of El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua

to help the countries recover from the devastation of Hurricane Mitch. Relief efforts provided by Williams' unit include building bridges, providing basic medical care and providing clean water for the local people.

Joint Task Force Eagle is an ongoing combined U.S. and Central America relief operation which enhances the relationship and interoperability between the U.S. and Central America.

The 1997 graduate of Arlington High School joined the Marine Corps in September 1997.

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## Pain-free shoveling

**Question:** Now that winter is in full swing and we've gotten some snow, I'm concerned about my husband shoveling. What can he do to prevent the back pain he has every year?

**Answer:** "The best way to prevent back pain and injuries is to keep the spine straight," says Molly Day, physical therapist and Clinical Supervisor of the HealthSouth Rehabilitation Center at Symmes Hospital. "This means that you need to bend at the hips and use the leg and abdominal muscles to pick up snow rather than bend over."

The next most common way people injure their back is by twisting the spine to toss the snow off the shovel. "Make sure you turn your body as a unit. Do not twist at the waist," says Day.

Being in good overall condition is also recommended. "Shoveling is a strenuous activity. Those who exercise regularly are much less likely to experience muscle fatigue which can also lead to injuries. And, working out too strenuously for your body's condition always results in general muscle soreness," Day recommends basic stretching and a 10 to 15 minute warm-up before shoveling. "It's never good to take your heart rate from its resting rate to a maximum heart rate

too quickly. You should build up to that by doing some calisthenics or going for a brief walk before shoveling. Ask your physician or seek advice from a trainer at your health club."

You also may want to consider purchasing one of several types of ergonomically-designed shovels that are now on the market. The odd-looking design actually angles the shovel in a way that eliminates the need to bend over. Those with a good-sized driveway or who are getting older may want to consider paying for a plowing service or purchasing a snow blower. According to Day, "shoveling is a good workout muscle-wise but is too strenuous for older folks with any medical problems."

If you have questions you would like answered in this column, write to Ask Symmes Hospital, Symmes Hospital & Medical Center, Hospital Road, Arlington, MA 02474. While we welcome questions from our readers, we regret that we may not be able to answer all inquiries in this column.

## Ask Symmes Hospital



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## CHALLENGING SITUATIONS

In the process known as "voir dire" (literally, "to speak the truth"), prospective jurors are asked questions by attorneys on both sides. It is hoped that their answers will reveal any biases or preferences that will have a bearing on their suitability for serving on the jury. If one attorney believes there was an error in how the entire jury pool was selected, he or she can ask that no one on the panel be permitted to serve as jurors - request known as a "challenge to the array." Jurors who are "challenged for cause" are excused for a specific reason (such as showing a bias). Attorneys may also move to eliminate prospective jurors they believe unsympathetic to their clients ("peremptory challenge").

HINT: While the number of peremptory

challenges that an attorney may make is limited, the number of challenges for cause is limited only by the judge's unwillingness to grant them any further.

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# COMMENT



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Samuel  
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## EDITORIAL

### Legislators must take it easy on local businesses

Some of the comments by House speaker Thomas Finneran last week in Stow were right on target as far as the state's relationship with the business community is concerned.

Finneran, addressing the Assabet Valley Chamber of Commerce's annual meeting, said the state should not hurt its economic growth by squeezing businesses. That includes requiring them to offer employee benefits that they can't afford.

The House speaker also expressed fears the state's current economic prosperity may be short-lived, and said it should act cautiously in its spending practices. There may be a budget surplus now, he says, but don't count on it always being there.

It was refreshing to hear a Democrat expressing sentiments once heard only from Republicans. Traditionally, Democrats have reacted emotionally instead of practically to social problems, without thinking enough about the cost of fixing them.

The road to hell is paved with good intentions. And when well-intended legislators pass taxes, implement social programs or back causes that affect employers, they can endanger the jobs of the people who work there as well.

In this era of high technology and high mobility, businesses don't have to anchor themselves anywhere. So while Massachusetts may be a pleasant place to live, that doesn't mean companies have to stay here. Some will simply move to where they can operate more cheaply.

The fact that a top-ranked Democrat essentially endorsed restraint by the legislature will hopefully mark the start of a new relationship between the state and employers in Massachusetts.

It's about time the persons who put their time and their fortunes on the line didn't have to spend so much time worrying about the next utopian proposal launched on Beacon Hill.

### News item: Bird watchers in town get glimpse of rare species



### Clinton — like Mike — defies gravity

For 77 minutes last week, President Bill Clinton showed why he is the Michael Jordan of political speech-making.

Not only did he sink jump shot after shot on everything from Medicare spending to race relations, he scored each point — like Jordan — by defying gravity. In Clinton's case, it is the gravity of an impeachment trial that would have sunk a mere mortal.

But Clinton, from his first days on the campaign trail, has shown time and again he is no ordinary politician. He has an almost eerie ability to withstand punishing tribulation — much of it self-inflicted — and still win his way back into the public's heart.

He does this by entering into an emotional pact with voters in a way no modern president, not even Ronald Reagan, has been able to. It is a pact that allows Clinton's supporters — and poll after poll shows his approval ratings above 60 percent — to excuse behavior that would have euthanized the careers of lesser pols.

That's what enabled Clinton — fresh from impeachment in the House and under trial in the Senate — to deliver an almost flawless speech, calling for a higher minimum wage, pledging to protect children from smoking, demanding Congress use budget surpluses to protect Social Security.

Defying gravity. Much has been made of Clinton's famed ability to "compartmentalize" — place differ-

ent parts of his public and private life in mental "boxes," one "box" for public policy, one "box" for Hillary and Chelsea, one "box" for Monica and all that affair has wrought.

But last week's performance went beyond compartmentalization.

For about an hour and a half, Clinton welcomed the American public into his personal Oz — a land where impeachment and scandal warranted not even the most oblique of references, where policy breezed through the haze of recrimination, where Clinton was everyone's president and everyone's best friend.

In typical fashion, Clinton threw policy initiatives against the wall like strands of overcooked spaghetti to see which would stick. On technique alone, Clinton is unrivaled. He can be stern one moment, folksy the next. He has the good sense to surround himself with political "untouchables" like war heroes and baseball sluggers. He also has the uncanny talent of keeping his political enemies off-balance.

Republicans, having already voted to impeach him in the House, were in a real quandary about how to handle the speech. Should they boycott? Should they sit in stony silence?

In the end, most Republicans spent the evening sitting on their hands. One of the few times they rose to applaud was when Clinton introduced civil rights legend Rosa Parks.

That could be a mistake, if viewers mistook Republicans' disdain for Clinton as disdain for some of the popular programs he was suggesting, it could backfire.

At one point, Clinton even joked about the chilly atmosphere. After one of his proposals received a smattering of applause from the Republican side of the House chamber, he

quipped, "There was more balance on the see-saw that time. I like that."

Another thing the speech accomplished was to remind Clinton's foes of a simple, frustrating political reality: Most Americans like Clinton, but not in the way citizens are supposed to like their president.

Americans are supposed to admire their presidents the way they admired Franklin Roosevelt. They are supposed to revere them, they way they now revere Abraham Lincoln. They are supposed to look up to them, the way many looked up to Reagan.

They're not supposed to like their presidents the way they like friends — those friends who live sloppy personal lives, but who they think have good hearts.

But that's the way voters like Clinton. In some weird, Oz-like way, that's may be why so many seem to be sticking by Clinton through all his travails.

It's also why so many Republicans, and some Democrats, are baffled that a larger slice of the American electorate doesn't share their outrage. How can someone who has so defiled the office of the presidency not spark some kind of moral revolution?

If most Americans had revered Clinton, they might be calling for his head. But most Americans don't revere him, they just like him. His support is broad, but not deep.

What the last State of the Union address of the 20th century will do is remind voters — and Clinton's Senate jurors — why the American public twice elected him president.

If his legacy is now his chief policy, maybe that's all Clinton could hope to accomplish.

Steve LeBlanc covers the Statehouse for Community Newspaper Co.

#### At the Statehouse



STEVE LEBLANC

### Elections at a glance

#### Seats Open:

##### Board of Selectmen: (2)

Stephen J. Gilligan  
Charles Lyons

##### School Committee: (3)

Barbara C. Goodman  
Martin Thrope  
One open seat

##### Board of Assessors: (1)

Maurice H. O'Connell

##### Town Clerk: (1)

Corinne M. Rainville

##### Town Treasurer: (1)

John Bilefer

##### Housing Authority: (1)

John Griffin

##### Town Meeting:

91 seats

#### Important Dates:

**Feb. 1** - Last day for Town Meeting members to give written notice of re-election plans.

**Feb. 4** - Last day for candidates to obtain blank nomination papers.

**Feb. 8** - Last day for candidates to file nomination papers for signature certification by the Registrars of Voters.

**Feb. 24** - Last day to withdraw or file objections to nomination papers.



**Feb. 25** - Drawing of candidates' names to determine position on the ballot.

**March 6** - Last day for voters to register for the town election.

**March 27** - Town election.

#### Election Policies:

- The Arlington Advocate will print one formal announcement or position paper from each candidate. The submission should be no more than 600 words and should be accompanied by a color photograph. No announcements will be printed after the March 11 edition.

- Readers are welcome to submit letters, limited to 400 words, that address campaign issues. Letters that merely endorse or denigrate a candidate will not be published. No election letters will be published after the March 18 edition.

- Candidates may submit letters to the editor that address issues raised either by readers' letters or by their opponents. These letters should not be longer than 300 words.

## THE ARLINGTON ADVOCATE

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#### MISSION STATEMENT

It is the goal of The Arlington Advocate to provide our readers with the highest quality local coverage they desire and need, in a newspaper that is accurate, timely and filled with an intimate and lively portrait of the community in which they live, work and play.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Letter writer showed 'ethnic intolerance'

To the editor:

I am writing in response to Anthony Bernacchi's Jan. 14 Letter to the Editor attacking the Father Kastanas, pastor of the St. Athanasius parish — a letter which attacked not only the spiritual leader of the Greek Orthodox community of Arlington, but which also had the audacity to paraphrase the Bible to justify and weakly mask Mr. Bernacchi's blatant ethnic intolerance.

To clarify matters once again, the Osco Problem stems from the fact that Osco was sold secretly, without informing the owners of neighboring structure, which happens to be a church. Yet another coup for our town development office which earlier sought to bring that other high-end retailer — McDonalds — to our town to create valuable and much-sought-after minimum wage job opportunities. The exorbitant price which Osco paid for the Mass. Ave. property could never have been raised by the parish.

More importantly, however, is the sad fact that Mr. Bernacchi saw fit to refer to Father Kastanas

as "the Greek pastor." Is this happening in Arlington, a town which boasts of its ethnic diversity and tolerance? Should ethnicity be an issue in this case? We're all Americans here, Mr. Bernacchi. Would you like your mother to be referred to as "the Italian woman?"

By the way, I had never heard of Mr. Muldoon before this unfortunate confrontation. Perhaps to you, Mr. Bernacchi, Muldoon is a well-known and respected lawyer, but as a lawyer, I'm sure he can take the heat or he, too, would remove himself from his situation.

Lygia Grigorios

### Reader: Bernacchi's letter contained slur

To the editor:

Mr. Bernacchi's contempt for those who opposed the Osco facility was apparent in his recent angry letter to the editor. However, his message complete with an intended derogatory reference to "the Greek pastor," regarding the Rev. Dr. Nicholas Kastanas was not only overtly disrespectful of the reverend's office, but contained a certain ethnic-slur edge to it as well.

Father Kastanas is a much respected and dedicated priest, highly regarded within the local community, diocese, archdiocese and church. You would be hard pressed to find many others who harbor the Bernacchis' disdain.

And as a point of information, the Greek Orthodox faith doesn't by default have only "Greek pastors" or communicants, no more than our fellow Roman Catholic brethren can be assumed to be of Italian background.

Mr. Bernacchi's attempt to claim the moral high ground by citing the 10 commandments was betrayed by the very meaning of his 'epistle.'

So far as the Advocate's role in this is concerned, can we soon look forward to others venting their dislike of a particular "Chinese," "Polish" or "Irish" cleric, businessperson or politician.

George Makredes  
Churchill Avenue

### Affordable housing can save community

After living in the Fenway for nine years, I moved to East Arlington in 1996. I chose Arlington because it had a good mix of people, it was historic, and it was fair-

ly affordable. What most people ignore during a real estate boom is the squeeze that it puts on working people and our families. Most, if not all newly built housing units in this area have been luxury units.

After living in Arlington for the last two years, I'm in danger of getting priced out soon. As \$300,000 houses go up in this area and my rent goes up every year, I'm starting to get the same feeling here as I did in The Fenway. I saw my once diverse and thriving neighborhood turned into a sterile and mean-spirited village for the privileged few.

The rent on the apartment I lived in went from \$650 a month in 1987, to over \$1,500 in 1999. My story is not unique, just ask the longtime and former residents of the Davis Square area and Charlestown. To prevent any further erosion of affordable housing in Arlington, we need to muster up the same passion and action that helped to stop a mega-drugstore chain from moving in. We need to stay in contact with elected officials and tell them to make affordable housing in Arlington a priority. And we need to fight harassment from developers together as



# Wintertime heats up boyhood memories

BY G.R. MCKINLEY

About this time of year, when we have been into the heating season for a couple of months or so my mind drifts back to the neighborhood of upper Highland Avenue where I grew up in the 30s.

Those years were a wonderful era for kids. Families in that area named Jefferson, Teel, Jeffrey, Smith, Hellman and Dean produced mostly boys and all these families sent sons to the war. Many fond memories of Robbins' Farm, coasting on ice covered Eastern Avenue, skating on Hill's Pond, cops and robbers, cowboys and Indians and all the regular and irregular sports rounded out a kid's agenda. All the spontaneous after school and vacation activities seemed endless and always unsupervised. I can't ever recall just sitting around talking. There were always plenty of things to do.

Besides all the fun things, there were also home duties and assignments that had to be done before one was assured of being able to go out after school. Without question the worst punishment handed out by parents was a day or so of staying in. This was an unwritten law in those days, laws which all my pals clearly understood, but never talked about. If a pal didn't show up after school we kids knew he was "in" for something.

When I was about 8 or 9 I was assigned a "premier" duty that would last for many years and that after time I became quite proficient at. My Dad would "let" me take care of the furnace during his absence. I wasn't exactly overjoyed with this task but there it was. Could I really let my mother and sister shovel coal? It was after all a man's job. Our heating "system" was steam generated in an asbestos covered furnace fueled by coal or coke. Anthracite and bituminous were words that I understood and were part of my vocabulary early in life.

In early fall I would occasionally hear Mother and Dad talking about getting fuel for the winter. Dad would spend his day off "shoring up" the two coal bins in the cellar making sure they were rugged enough to withstand the seven or eight tons of coke about to be delivered. Dad was a firm believer in coke as a fuel. I would sometimes hear him debating his opinion with fathers of my pals.

Finally the day of delivery arrived. My mother would "seal" the cellar door with a damp sheet to prevent some of the dust from coming upstairs. The truck would come loaded to capacity. Two or three men with only their eyes showing through black grime would open the cellar windows over the bins and thrust chutes down to the floor. The men would then begin to fill large canvas sacks with coke from a small door on the back of the now upraised truck. The men would swing the heavy sacks onto their backs and carry them to the cellar windows and deposit the contents down the chute and into the bins. The laborious work these men did was not unnoticed by us guys. We often hung around to watch the process and wonder if this job might be our fate.

When the weather finally signaled the need to warm the house Dad would retire to the cellar for many hours and "lay" the first fire of the year and it should be noted that this fire was not to go out 'till spring. He would call me down to show me how he started the fire with crumpled newspaper and kindling wood. Once the wood was reduced to coals he'd gradually put in the coke, hoping it would "catch." The furnace had, of course, the asbestos covered steam pipes running to radiators throughout the house. It also had all sorts of vents and drafts, chains, balances and counterbalances which were supposed to control the fire. I would try to talk my way out of the cellar as he settled into an old chair in front of the boiler, lit his pipe, and began the ritual of controlling the fire to achieve the most efficient burn. This process would generally take hours and the cellar would soon be filled with the fragrance of Dad's pipe. He would explain to me that the fire must not go out, that the house would soon be cold if it did and the responsibility to see that it didn't — when he was not there — was mine. It wasn't necessary to understand the mysteries of chains and drafts, but I was not to let the fire die due to lack of fuel. I knew that this

was a big deal for me and I understood the message right away.

Dad would be up early each morning to "hoop" up the boiler and warm the house for the family. Then he went to work and I went up to the new Brackett School with my gang. When I got home in the afternoon I went right to the boiler. Mom never had to tell me. I would throw open the furnace feed door and shovel coke onto the dying coals. As I became more experienced I might make more changes in the drafts depending on the severity of the cold outside. That was my main duty but there were others which I carried out every winter's day my Dad was at work. He wouldn't get home 'till about 7 p.m., so my job was critical. I never received any special accolades but I knew that letting the fire die on a cold winter's day might mean more than a couple of days in the house after school.

Over the course of several years my story would have to include the times the fire did go out. The reasons were simple enough. A couple of times I just blew it. A big hockey game at Hill's Pond with the guys from Highland Avenue playing the guys from Newport or Scituate St. might have been the reason I forgot as I grabbed skates and stick and headed for the park. Sometimes I wouldn't even think about the fire 'till I got home from afternoon play and sometimes the fire would just be out from its own choosing when I got home from school. Try to explain that one to Dad. I'd rush down to a cool cellar, open the furnace door and immediate panic would set in. I would work a poker through the ash to gain draft, feverishly thrust in crumpled newspaper, kindling wood and a few pieces of coke, drop in a lighted match and pray. Sometimes I'd have to repeat the process several times. I don't ever recall failure and punishment. But, looking back, being the expert that he was, Dad must have known. I probably left plenty of clues. I smile as I think about it now but at the time it was sheer terror. Of course, as I grew older I became more confident and I excelled at the "cover up." But still I walked a narrow path a few times.

We kids didn't know it then but the 30s were glorious days for us. Four long walks each day to the Brackett School and never ending fun each afternoon. All the families struggled in those years, some more than others, but we kids never knew it 'till we grew older. I remember my Mother cooking extras once in awhile to share with neighbors and vice versa. Today I drive through the area as often as I can. As I do, my heart beats faster as scenes conjure up remembrances from long ago. There's where the baseball went through Mrs. G's window, here's where we played street hockey on ice and the houses there are standing in the field where we built our Christmas tree forts. The upper Highland area still looks about the same, neat, orderly and clean. Its streets and houses still harbor many great memories and stories from the 30s.

G. R. McKinley is a Brand Street resident.

LETTERS, FROM PAGE 4

a town. If we don't do something soon, Arlington will have much bigger problems than increased traffic and the negative impact on an historic area, the loss of community is the greatest loss of all.

Chris Clark  
Broadway

## Gains can be made on affordable housing

To the editor:

The Board and staff of the Housing Corporation of Arlington (HCA) would like to thank all the people who attended our Jan. 6 meeting and helped to initiate a public conversation about the lack of affordable housing opportunities for many Arlington residents.

We applaud Selectman Charles Lyons for submitting a warrant article on this issue for the upcoming Town Meeting. The warrant article will put this issue on the public agenda by forming a task force composed of people and organizations concerned about affordable housing and about what kind of community Arlington should be in the 21st century. We urge Town Meeting members to seize this important opportunity to foster a community dialogue about the housing crisis facing low and moderate income people in town and to vote in favor of this warrant article when it comes before Town Meeting in the Spring.

While median income in Arlington has certainly risen above \$43,400 since the 1990 census, we won't know for sure until the 2000 census what that figure is. However, even if current median income approaches \$60,000 (which was last year's median income for the greater Boston area according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development), the fact that it takes almost \$80,000 of income to purchase the current median priced single family home in Arlington indicates that many people are being left behind. The squeeze is on almost equally for rental housing as it is on the homeownership side.

While this might convey a very dismal picture, with few options available for concerned citizens, town officials and low-moderate income town residents, we wish to put forward an alternative vision. Many creative ideas were discussed during our brainstorming session on Jan. 6 by concerned citizens, prospective buyers, public officials and stakeholders in the homebuying process.



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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Beyond Arlington's immediate boundaries there is increasing recognition of the urgent need to look at housing affordability in suburban communities. We are not alone with this problem. By looking at all the options, by gathering our own vast resources of talent and experience here in town, by joining together with other communities facing the same issue, we can move forward.

We are not suddenly going to produce a large number of affordable homes or apartment units that will respond to every situation. But by working together, by taking the long term view and by thoughtfully considering all ideas that could work for Arlington, we will over time, make great strides towards meeting the housing needs of many more of our residents and maintaining the diversity and vibrancy of our town.

The HCA looks forward to contributing to this effort and we invite the community to join in it as well.

Neal Mongold, President, HCA  
Robin Zucker, Director

## Drivers should slow up on Spring Street

To the editor:

I've heard it several times: "I didn't know that street had a name." It does. It's Spring Street. It also has homes, and residents, some elderly. Many of these residents have children. Some have dogs or cats.

Spring Street has everything a nice residential street should have, except one thing. Sidewalks. It also has one thing it shouldn't have. Motorists who fly up and down between Highland Avenue and the Concord Turnpike access or Jason Street, at speeds which

sometimes exceed 40 mph, when the speed limit is 20 mph.

Now, before the many folks who have witnessed my (possibly) less-than-perfect driving, respond with threats to padlock my ignition, let me just say it flat out. OK, sometimes, I too, drive just a little too fast. Most people probably do from time to time. So, I don't wish to scold anyone. I'd just like people to become aware of the potential dangers on Spring Street.

Spring Street is the stretch of asphalt running parallel to Route 2, starting at the southeastern end of Eastern Ave., down to a dead-end past Jason Street and Hillsdale Road. It is commonly used as a shortcut to gain access to Route 2 and very often used to avoid Route 2. It's an easy way to get you to Arlington Center via Jason Street or to Belmont via Pleasant Street. I don't mind people using Spring Street mainly as a shortcut; that's what roads are for. I only ask that you make note of a couple of things when next you chance to drive on our street. Glance (quickly) to your right and left. You will see (perhaps for the very first time) that we have no sidewalks. There are bends in the road which interrupt the drivers' view of possible pedestrians in the street. Finally, keep in mind that children as well as other pedestrians, some who walk, jog or run, are forced to use the street. They have no choice. Remember that there is an entrance here to Menotomy Rocks Park, frequented by dog walkers, and sometimes dogs will dash into the street.

Think about how terrible you would feel if you accidentally injured someone's dog.

Then think about how terrible you would feel if you accidentally killed someone's child.

Please drive carefully.

Donnarose Russian  
Spring Street  
Town Meeting member,  
Precinct 10

## Mispelling sighted in common bird list

To the Editor:

I was truly amazed at the number of different species of birds that have been sighted in our fair town as indicated in your listing entitled: "Common Sightings of Birds in Arlington" in your issue of January 14, 1999.

I have a bird feeder in my back yard and I think I might have sighted a species of bird not included in your list. I believe it could be listed in the "Doves and Cuckoos" category, a first cousin to your "Morning Dove", but commonly spelled "Mourning Dove."

Francis I. Baratta  
Ridge Street

## Looking for the name of a former teacher

To the editor:

Would your older readers try to help me recall the name of a piano teacher who, in the 30s and 40s, lived and taught in an apartment over the former Locatelli's Restaurant, next to the Capitol Theater?

She was a tall, austere woman, and a good pianist. The name, Madam Houle, or Poole, comes to mind. Maybe something similar?

If you have any information, I would appreciate a postal card reply sent to the address below — and thank you very much.

A former Arlington resident.

Althea O. Wharton  
RR1 Box 5405  
Monroe, ME 04951



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# Pappas takes over at Chamber of Commerce

■ **CHAMBER**, FROM PAGE 1

publicize themselves, not only to the business community, but to the entire town.

"We worked very hard with the Redevelopment Board to make sure they saw the business perspective," said Ryerson, who attended almost every Redevelopment Board meeting in the last four years. "Our presence and interjections then branched out to the Selectmen and the Board of Health."

"We realized that so many neighborhood groups were attending these meetings, and that was good, but we also knew the Chamber needed to be just as vocal to represent the business community," said Ryerson.

But Ryerson and Pappas believe their biggest accomplishment is their role in the renovation of the Heights. The project began back in 1993 when the town hired consultants to do a study on how to make the Massachusetts Avenue corridor more attractive and vibrant. They decided to begin with the Heights because it was in the most need of renovation.

The project began because the business community, the Chamber, and residents all wanted more parking in the Heights. But now the Heights project is completed, and there is less parking than ever before.

"The Heights looks beautiful, and everyone is very happy with it," said Ryerson. "But we still have a promise from (Director of Planning) Alan McClellenn that when the assisted living complex is completed next to the MBTA, it will provide more parking for the businesses. We will not forget that promise."

Ryerson said the lack of parking is not the only difficulty the Chamber has had with the Redevelopment Board. She said she was the last to be notified that Margaret Spengler, an advocate and representative for the business community, was resigning from the board.

"I read it in the paper; that was the first I heard of it," said Ryerson. "She was a very important person to the business community, and I would have thought the Redevelopment Board would

have contacted us for our perspective."

In addition Ryerson said she was also the last to know that the Board of Health was considering a regulation requiring every food business in Arlington to have a certified food handler.

"These were both decisions that affected the business community," said Ryerson. "We are available. We are here and I don't understand why we were not used."

Ultimately Ryerson said she would like to see more involvement between the boards.

"Up until recently I had never seen a Redevelopment Board member at the Chamber of Commerce meetings," said Ryerson.

Pappas said he will work hard to insure the Chamber's involvement.

"We want to keep the Chamber in the foreground and make sure that we are more active in government," said Pappas adding that it is equally important for the Chamber to stay active with the businesses.

The Business Exposition, which will be held April 25, is one way the Chamber is trying to encourage an active business community.

"There will be many business-to-business seminars that will provide information on financial planning, answer questions about insurance or consultants. But most of all it will showcase the businesses and give them a chance to market their products to the consumer," said Pappas.

This is the first year the Chamber has held an exposition and both Pappas and Ryerson hope that it will better educate people about the business community.

Pappas said his biggest worry is the change he has recently begun to see among residents.

"For the last five years Arlington has been a very open business environment. But now it seems that many residents are becoming restrictive in what types of businesses they want in their community," said Pappas.

Pappas said residents tend to react to a new business rather than waiting to see how it can blend in. But he hopes that, if he says active



Incoming Chamber of Commerce president Chuck Pappas with outgoing president Carol Ryerson.

in town meetings and lets people know how complicated it is to run a small business, people will begin to understand.

As for the immediate future Pappas does not think the business community is going to change, but he would like to see more redevelopment of existing buildings.

Overall Ryerson and Pappas said they are hopeful for the future and proud of what the Chamber has accomplished in the last five years.

"We have a great Board of Directors now," said Ryerson. "Years ago we really had to struggle to fill the 20 spots, now we actually had to turn people away."

Ryerson had special praise for Carolyn Simmons, the Chamber's executive secretary. "Carolyn has really been running the show. She is part-time but almost always works 40 hours a week," said Ryerson.

In addition, said Pappas, the new vice president, Maureen Gormley, will bring in fresh ideas and a new perspective.

"I think we have made a 100-percent turn around since we walked in the door," said Ryerson.

The chamber held a special meeting to elect new officers and 20 members to serve on the Board of Directors. Chamber officers are elected for two-year terms and

directors are elected for three-year staggered terms. Steven Andrew was elected treasurer.

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to announce and congratulate the individuals elected to the following positions:

**Board members through 1999**  
Robert Bowes, Bowes Realtors/Better Homes; Leo Corsetti, Doukakis & Corsetti Insurance; Tim Lordan, Consulting; Mary Ann McGovern, Cambridge Savings Bank; Neil McInnis, McInnis Financial & Insurance Brokerage, Inc.; Carl Toumayan, Keshian & Reynolds; William Winder, Primerica Financial Services; Daniel Xenos, Napa Auto Parts;

**Board members through 2000**  
Richard Moskow, Consulting; Ronald Nigro, RJS Realty; Peter Russo, Main Event Tuxedo; Carol Ryerson, ARC Travel; Kenneth Simmons, August & Simmons; David Walkinshaw, Saville Funeral Home;

**Board members through 2001**  
Rachael Baxter, Trader Joe's; Philip Giordano, US Trust; John Lewis, Commonwealth Financial Group; Dana Linet, Icon-International Consulting; Stacey Stewart, Homemaking with a Heart; Michael Tarantino, Tarantino Insurance;

# Keefe sees up-close view of homeless

■ **HOMELESS**, FROM PAGE 1

few staff members who were once homeless themselves.

For these homeless men and women Keefe counsels, Jack Bowler of St. Agnes Church is holding a blanket drive. Until Jan. 31, he is collecting blankets from people in the community and will give them to Keefe to disperse during his route each night.

The main goal of the counselors who go out in the vans is to build up trust with the homeless people, Keefe said. "We don't force them to do anything; we just talk to them and make friends so that some day we can possibly get them to go to one of the many shelters in the city or go into a detox program."

Often, he said, it can take months to build a relationship with a particular person on the street. Keefe carries a flashlight to guide him through alleys and pathways but turns it off when he approaches the people so he won't frighten them. "Slowly, the people will start talking to us after they see us for a while and then we can begin the relationship which will involve letting them know about the resources available to them," he said.

"When I first started, I was amazed that the staff who go out on the vans know everyone — know their first and last names and even know how they take their coffee," Keefe said. "Even when we'd pass what looked like a lump under a blanket, the counselors would say 'Oh, that's Joe' or 'That's Tom'."

Just about every person living on the street is abusing some kind of substance, whether alcohol or drugs, Keefe said. "I once heard that the age you start using is the age you stop growing emotionally so quite a few of the people out there could be thinking like 12- or 13-year-olds."

The people come from all walks of life, Keefe said. He has seen men, women, and children from a variety of backgrounds; he knows one of the men living on the street was once a well-know writer.

"It's easy to see how this can happen to someone," Keefe said. "You learn a lot about yourself in this kind of work and the most important is the need we all have for love and human contact."

Keefe was 21 at the time and the experience opened his eyes dramatically. "I talked to the people who lived in the house all the time and I realized how filled I am with empathy," he said. "That's the first time it hit me that in different circumstances, I could be in these people's position. Had the owner of Cheers not given me a job and taken an interest in helping me, who knows what would have happened?"

While working at the home in Dorchester, Keefe also learned what drugs and alcohol can do to an individual. "Instead of going on a cross-country trip or to Europe to learn about life, this was my eye-opening experience," he said.

After that, Keefe was committed to working with homeless people and trying to help them put their lives back together. "The biggest thing we do is just talk to people and give them a chance for friendship and human contact," he said. "If you want to help out, you really don't have to give money all the time but just look some of these people in the eye and say hello."

**'It's easy to see how [homelessness] can happen to someone. You learn a lot about yourself in this kind of work and the most important is the need we all have for love and human contact.'**

BOB KEEFE

## Always a problem

In fact, Keefe said, it's not a good idea to simply give homeless people money and not expect them to earn it.

Recently, Keefe has begun reading historical accounts of different people's experience working with the homeless. "Homelessness has always been around and people have always tried to fix it," he said.

What seems to work best is asking people to work for their keep, Keefe said. In the mid 1800s, the homeless community was practically eradicated in the south end of Boston after a group of street people were asked to work in day care centers and thrift shops in exchange for their shelter and food. Eventually, the people began running the shops and became responsible members of a small community.

When Franklin Roosevelt introduced the New Deal in the 1930s, however, the homeless were simply handed money which didn't seem to help them at all. In time, Keefe said, they began fighting among themselves and their sense of community dissipated.

"We need to learn that you've got to take care of yourself and be responsible for yourself," Keefe said. "We're in charge of our own health and happiness."

As he helps the homeless, Keefe continues to help himself learn and grow by reading and writing on a regular basis. Currently, he is writing short stories and poetry and meets with a professor he met through the Pine Street Inn on an informal, though regular basis to discuss his writing.

In his scant free time, Keefe also runs and plays the harmonica and guitar for a garage band he formed with a group of friends.

Anyone wishing to donate clothing or money to the Pine Street Inn can contact Michelle Meiser at (617) 983-5686. For Arlington's blanket drive, new and used clean blankets may be dropped off at the Fidelity House Gym on Medford Street on Sunday, Jan. 31, from 8 a.m.-noon.

## Personal journey

Keefe never intended to pursue work in counseling but happened upon it by chance. After graduating from Arlington Catholic, he said he enrolled at Boston University to study writing but ended up dropping out. In fact, Keefe enrolled and dropped out of college three times.

"I just didn't adjust well to a structured schedule and I didn't really know what I wanted to do," he said.

So Keefe went to work while pursuing writing on his own. He was serving as a doorman at Cheers in Boston when a friend told him about the Pine Street Inn. After looking through a book of job openings for the shelter, he decided he'd like to try working as a caretaker and live-in counselor for one of Pine Street's satellite houses for homeless people suffering from AIDS.

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"All of us at Anton's Cleaners are pleased to be in Arlington. We're bringing with us 86 years of clothing care excellence and quality, friendly service."

"We're getting ready to remodel the store to give it the Anton's look. We think you'll like what you see. We know you'll like the way we care for your clothes."



Arthur Anton Jr.

## We give you more

- Expert spotting
- Same day shirt service at no extra charge
- Frequent Cleaning Club discounts
- Easy VIP Express Service
- Alterations
- Sheets, pillowcases and draperies
- Anton's Closet for off-season clothing care
- Visit us at [www.antons.com](http://www.antons.com) for a surprise and directions to our 39 locations

Chemical-free. Guaranteed. Only at Anton's.

**\$5 Off Drycleaning**  
\$10 minimum  
Not valid with any other discounts. One coupon per visit, per day. Present coupon with incoming order.  
Offer expires 3/31/99

**99¢ shirts** Wed. & Thurs. only  
Not valid with any other discounts. One coupon per visit, per day. Present coupon with incoming order.  
Offer expires 3/31/99



**WE'RE WAITING...The Holidays are over NO MORE EXCUSES!**  
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